



OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP (ORVAW)

Meeting Minutes

Location: Grayling Nature Center
100 South James Street
Grayling MI 49738
Date: March 16, 2023
2 - 4 p.m.

Welcome – Roll Call

PRESENT FOR THE OFF-ROAD VEHICLE ADVISORY WORKGROUP:

- James Maike, Chair
- Keith Lynch, Vice Chair
- James Hunt
- Bob Meyers
- Mike Timm (absent)
- Jarrod Biebel
- Trevor Hoffer

PRESENT FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR) STAFF

Tim Novak, Annalisa Centofanti, Greg Kinser, Paige Perry, Blake Gingrich, Sage Hegdal, Ron Yesney, Peter Costa, Jeff Kakuk, Scott Slavin, Jill Sell, Rob Katona, Michael Desnoyer, Michael Hearn (LED), Andrew Kenyon (USFS)

Others: Paul Mulder, Karl Davenport, Thomas Dunn, Don Britton, Jenny Cook, Craig Pinkelman, Mike Maves, Ryan Laporte, Amy Scharmen-Burgdolf, Tom Craig, David Nuechterlein, Dick Ranney

Mindy Frenandes (State Representative John Roth), Rob Pallarito (Senator Michelle Hoitenga 36th District).

Meeting minutes

ACTION ITEMS

Meeting called to order at 2:03 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

James Maike presented Dick Ranney with a certificate honoring him for his leadership, dedication, and overall support for the safety and wellbeing of the ORV communities.

Roll Call

Motion was made by Bob Meyers to approve the November 2022 minutes, Keith Lynch, seconded, with all in favor. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Keith Lynch to approve the March 16 agenda and seconded by Jarrod Biebel, with all in favor. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Craig, President of Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association, asked the ORVAW committee to consider making a motion to oppose legislation that is similar to House Bill 4535, that was introduced back in 2021. Tom has heard there is a new version of the HB 4535 legislation being re-introduced.

BUSINESS ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

SELP TRAIL SPECIALIST - SAGE HEGDAL

Tim Novak, DNR, introduced Sage Hegdal as the new Trails Section southeastern Lower Peninsula Trails Specialist, filling the position that was vacated by Nick Van Bloem.

NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL GRANT COORDINATOR

Tim Novak also mentioned that Lee Maynard has recently started as the Trails Section Nonmotorized Grant Coordinator, filling the position vacated by Dakota Hewlett. Lee will be working on federal funded grants.

ORV TRAIL PERMIT PURCHASES / SECRETARY OF STATE (SOS)

James Maike talked about lobbying for the SOS to provide an ORV 3-year sticker registration, similar to snowmobile and boat registrations. James said this may be an avenue for revenue to be marked for trail maintenance.

Paul Mulder pointed out the idea behind a SOS registration will help identify a vehicle, same as a snowmobile. The vehicle identification may assist when illegal activity takes place.

Keith Lynch and Karl Davenport added involving the SOS may result in a loss of funds, rather than a benefit for the ORV program.

UPDATES

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Michael Desnoyer shared a presentation for the ORV financial update, copies of the presentation was shared with board members.

USFS UPDATE

Andrew Kenyon, USFS, reported due to the 2022 hiring process change in dynamics for seasonal employees, staff resources are short handed right now. However, the seasonal employees are slowly starting their positions and will be hired as permanent seasonal staff. There should be no gaps in ORV trail maintenance for the upcoming season.

LED UPDATE

Corporal Michael Hearn, Law Enforcement Division (LED), talked about the need for safety instructors. After the recertification process in 2022, currently, the State has 85 active instructors, not counting conservation officers. This is the lowest number of instructors in quite some time. A safety instructor academy is scheduled for May of this year. Online platform is still the most popular course, and due to the lack of instructors is prevailing.

Corporal Michael Hearn said he has not heard of any movement on aftermarket lights or colored lights within legislation.

Corporal Hearn added the accident stats for ORV is handled by local sheriff departments and is not the same process that is in place for snowmobile accident reporting. By law, the sheriff does not have to report ORV accidents to the DNR. Therefore, the DNR is not able to track the ORV accidents as it does for the snowmobile accidents per season.

ORV EQUIPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE (FORMER SNOW GROOMER)

Thomas Dunn is leading a subcommittee to explore what funds can be used for purchasing ORV equipment. Thomas reported the subcommittee has met 2 times already. Thomas and Scott Slavin, DNR, will meet with DNR finance staff to get a better understanding of the overall ORV program. Thomas hopes to have a resolution offered to ORVAW by August 2023.

Thomas also expressed the need for amending Part 811 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to remove the sunset reference from the off-road vehicle (ORV) bill. If the sunset reference is not removed the license and permit fees will revert to zero dollars (no fees). This should be the focus prior to any sticker change fees with the SOS.

NEW TRAIL SIGN

No updates from DNR at this time for the proposed new trail sign.

CAMP GRAYLING

Greg Kinser, DNR, reported that the proposed expansion is still at the Directors level for review and consideration of how to proceed. Public input closed the first part of February.

2023 FREE ORV WEEKENDS

June 10-11 / Aug. 19-20

DNR TRAIL SPECIALIST PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Scott Slavin, Blake Gingrich, Paige Perry, and Ron Yesney all spoke about trail projects or highlights in their regions.

Jessica Holley-Roehrs, DNR, said ORV grant sponsor pre-season meetings have been scheduled with the following dates:

March 25 - Upper Peninsula

April 1 - Lower Peninsula

2023 MEETINGS

May 10 – Grayling Township Hall

Aug. 9 – U.P.

Nov. 2 – Fall trails summit

CLOSING/ROUND ROBIN

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Bob Meyers and seconded by Trevor Hoffer, with all in favor. Motion carried. Meeting ended at 3:51 p.m.